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AUTHOR Baird, William
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ABSTRACT

The Blueprint for the Future program began in 1989-90 in 20 pilot schools in the Scarborough school system in Ontario, Canada. School support teams were established and the role of special-education resource teachers (SERT) was expanded through inservice training. Focused group interviews with principals and SERTs were conducted to determine progress of the schools in implementing the Blueprint plan. Principals also were given a short questionnaire on the school support teams. Results of the interviews showed that both principals and SERTs agreed that the SERT role had been expanded under the Blueprint plan. Blueprint also improved programming and monitoring of students with special needs. Other benefits cited included improved collaboration and communication, fulfillment of student social and emotional needs, improved staff perception of special-needs students, school-based decision making, improved administrative efficiency, positive reactions from parents and positive reaction from students. Concerns about the Blueprint program included effects on the special education continuum; inadequate customization to schools, insufficient inservice education, high SERT job requirements, procedural problems, and networking issues. Other problems included heavy workloads, increasing expectations of teachers, satisfying different parental expectations, and a lack of resources. Two substantial appendices include memos, instructions, and protocols as well as comments from principals and SERTs. (JPT)

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FOCUSED GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPALS OR DESIGNATES, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE TEACHERS (SERTS), FROM THE BLUEPRINT PILOT SCHOOLS

#90/91 - 03

William Baird,
Research Associate

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#90/91 - 03

William Baird,
Research Associate

January, 1991

Lorna Earl, Ph.D., Research Director
and General Editor

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I would like to thank the following people:

- Lorna Earl, for editing the report and training the moderators,
- Nancy Bruno, Chris Corbett, Gail Miles and Eleanor Phillips for doing such a great job as interview moderators,
- The Blueprint Core Committee members, for their assistance,
- The participants from the Blueprint pilot schools, for agreeing to attend on such short notice and for their enthusiastic participation,
- Marilyn Hale, for proofreading the report.

INTRODUCTION

Blueprint for the Future began in 1989-90 with 20 pilot schools. Inservices were carried out with two objectives: 1) to set up a school support team in each pilot school, and 2) to expand the role of the comprehensive resource teacher (SERT)[1] in each of these schools. In 1990-91, three additional schools joined the pilot project by making Blueprint their CRDI project for the year.

The school support teams and the SERTs have been carrying out their new duties since September, 1990. As they approached the end of this first trimester, the Blueprint core committee felt it was time to get some preliminary feedback from the pilot schools about their experiences. Since these schools were just at the beginning of the implementation process, it would have been premature to gather this feedback using intensive interviewing or questionnaire methods. As experts in program implementation point out, this is a time of much experimentation as well as high anxiety, with key players trying a new approach to helping students with special needs, and the regular classroom teachers responding to this new approach. Because the pilot implementation was in the early stages, the Blueprint core committee decided to conduct focused group interviews in as relaxed a situation as possible.

METHOD

A focused interview is an interview in which the questions asked are predetermined and focused on a particular subject of concern. The subject of concern in this case was the pilot

[1]SERT is the acronym for Special Education Resource Teacher. The term was introduced by the Blueprint core committee to reflect the new role taken on by the comprehensive resource teachers in the pilot schools.

schools' experiences in attempting to implement the Blueprint plan in their respective schools. The intent was to find out their thoughts about the Blueprint plan itself, as well as their perceptions of various aspects of the implementation process.

The Interviewees

The Blueprint plan involves three sets of key players at the school level: the school support teams, the SERTs and the regular classroom teachers. The regular teachers were just beginning to receive inservice concerning Blueprint; therefore, only the first two sets of key players were interviewed in separate group interviews:

1) The principals from the pilot schools, all of whom are members of their school support teams, were invited to a group interview. Because the invitation was on short notice, principals were asked to designate someone from the team (but not the SERT) if they could not possibly attend.

2) All the SERTs from the pilot schools were invited to attend their own group interview.

The Questions

The Research Associate assigned to the Blueprint core committee participated in brainstorming sessions with a member of the core committee and with the SERT sub-committee to generate possible questions to be included in the interviews. This first list was revised and refined at a meeting involving some members of the core committee and the Research Director. The end result was two sets of questions; one for the school support team representatives (8 questions) and one for the SERTs (11 questions). The questions are included in Appendix A.

The Interviewers

The ability of the interviewers, or moderators, to conduct a focused interview is critical to the quality and validity of the information gathered. Untrained moderators may not be aware of a selection bias on their part which directs discussion in a particular direction or is selective about what information gets recorded. To prevent this from happening, three moderators were selected to undergo a two hour training session with the Research Director. The guidelines for these moderators are included in Appendix A.

The three moderators, selected from the Blueprint SERT sub-committee, were Chris Corbett, Nancy Bruno and Gail Miles. Eleanor Philips teamed with Nancy and did the recording in their sessions.

The Interview Process

The interview with the principals or their designates took place on Friday, November 30th, 1990 (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.), at the Scarborough Board of Education. The interview with the SERTs took place after an inservice session on Monday, December 3rd, 1990 (11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), at the Holiday Inn (Scarborough).

The interviews began with a welcome and an introduction to the purpose of and procedure for the interviews by Jim Farquhar, Associate Superintendent, Student and Community Services and Chairman of the Blueprint core committee. The main points of this introduction are listed on the General Preamble sheet included in Appendix A. The purpose of this introduction was to explain the purpose of the interview, the procedures to be followed, and to reassure the participants that their comments would be recorded anonymously.

The participants were then randomly assigned to one of three groups each with a moderator. Each group met in a separate room for the interview with principals/designates, or at a separate table for the interview with the SERTs. The interviews began with the Moderators' Preamble -- a scripted introduction which explained the role of the moderator and the general guidelines for the discussion. This preamble is included in Appendix A. The moderators posed the questions in order, probed for clarification and elaboration, and encouraged equal participation in the discussion. Another important responsibility of the moderator was to record the participants' comments in point form on a prepared interview protocol.

After the interview was completed, the moderators recopied their rough notes into a clearer version. Later, the Research Associate met with each of the moderators to go over any recorded comments that required clarification.

A Short Survey

A very short survey was included with the memorandum sent out to the principals concerning the interviews. This survey asked five factual questions about the school support teams: what is the membership of the team?; how frequently does it meet?; how many students have been discussed by the team since September?; had the school staff been informed of the purpose of the team?; and how was this done? A copy of this survey is included in Appendix A.

KEY FINDINGS

SHORT SURVEY RESULTS

The short surveys were returned by 18 of the 23 pilot schools.

School Support Team Membership

The size of the school support teams ranged from 4 to 11 members. Thirteen of the teams ranged from 4 to 7 members; while 5 teams were on the large side, ranging from 9 to 11 members. Every team contained the principal and the SERTs from the school. Ten out of a possible 14 vice-principals also sat on the teams. Fifteen teams contained usually one or two support staff (e.g., from Psychology, Psychiatry, Social Work, Guidance, or Special Education), except for 3 teams which contained a large number of support staff (4, 6 and 7 members). These 3 teams resemble multi-disciplinary case management teams in their membership constitution. Sixteen teams contained usually one or two regular teachers, except for 3 teams which contained 3, 4 and 5 teachers respectively. In each of these cases, the regular teachers made up approximately half of the team, so that these teams resemble Teacher Assistance Teams.

Frequency of Team Meetings

Fifteen out of the 18 teams reported meeting on a monthly basis. This seems to have become the norm. One new team was planning to meet three times this year (i.e., every few months). Another team reported meeting every few months. The remaining team did not record how frequently they met, simply stating that it was "not enough" times.

Number of Children Discussed Since September

There was a large range in the number of children discussed by the teams since September, from 10 to 60 children. Since most of the teams reported meeting once a month, this large range cannot be attributed to some teams meeting more often than others.

Informing Staff of Team's Purpose

All 18 teams reported informing the regular staff about the school support team's purpose. All 18 reported doing so through a staff meeting, with many schools supplementing this with a memo (11 schools) and informal discussion (15 schools).

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Attendance at Interview

Representatives from 18 of the 23 pilot schools attended the interview for Principals/Designates. Of these, 12 were principals, two were support staff, and four were regular teachers. The SERTs from 19 schools attended the interview for the SERTs.

Data Analysis

The author of this report read the moderators' notes and identified the issues or themes underlying the specific comments made by the interviewees. The results are presented as short summaries organized under these themes. These summaries encapsulate the *main points* contained in the more specific comments.

Results of Data Analysis

The themes extracted from the interviewees' comments fell under four general headings:

1. The Benefits of Blueprint.
2. Concerns about Blueprint.
3. Facilitators to the Blueprint Implementation.
4. Difficulties with the Blueprint Implementation.

1. The Benefits of Blueprint.

Expansion of the Role of the SERT

Both the Principals/Designates and the SERTs mentioned the fact that the SERT's role has indeed been expanded, although not without problems as will be reported later. The SERTs are spending much more time in the regular classroom than in the past, and are more in touch with the regular curriculum. SERTs felt that they can provide service to many more students through integration, and that there is a reduced "urgency" to getting students out of the classroom to provide them with the additional support they need.

Another theme which received much comment, particularly by the SERTs, was the effect Blueprint has had in improving the programming and monitoring of students with special needs. SERTs reported that they were more in touch with the regular curriculum and could, along with the team's support staff, more effectively provide the regular teacher with programming ideas to deal with the students who need support. Interviewees also felt that students with problems were being identified earlier than in the past.

One major part of the SERT role being successfully implemented was that of a resource person "providing time, materials, lesson and teaching strategies, and recommendations for future placement" to teachers. SERTs reported that they were working more and more like consultants providing indirect service to the students in need by giving advice to teachers. Sometimes this was truly collaborative, and sometimes they reported having to work hard to gain access to certain classrooms. Both positive and negative consequences were described -- e.g., giving teachers much needed praise and reassurance versus being perceived as a "nag" by the staff. Some comments reflect the lack of time to fulfill all the requests for resources.

A few SERTs commented on the relative amount of withdrawal and integration work done. They stated that they were still doing a significant amount of withdrawal.

SERTs stated that they play a central role in organizing the teams' meetings and preparing the participants for discussing the students "referred" to the team. Some of the comments made reveal that the teams differ substantially in terms of how cohesive and focused they are.

Improved Collaboration and Communication

A theme which received much comment was the collaborative atmosphere that has developed because of Blueprint. Both the Principals/Designates and the SERTs described the developing "shared ownership" or "shared responsibility" for students by the school support team, the SERT and the regular teachers. Some comments highlighted the increase in the "sharing of ideas" or

"brainstorming" between staff, and in "team teaching". Also, a few comments expressed an improvement in parent-teacher and support staff-teacher communication.

Social and Emotional Benefits to Students

Both the Principals/Designates and the SERTs thought that the Blueprint approach helped protect and enhance the self-esteem of the students who have received service so far. The primary reason cited is that these students are able to remain in their home schools and with their peer groups.

Improved Staff Perception of Students with Special Needs

Some comments indicated that teachers were feeling more positively about dealing with students who need special attention. There was not much detail offered in these comments about why this might be the case, although one SERT did mention that these students are seen as members of the class and are less likely to be labeled.

School-Based Ownership for Special Education

This theme reflects the realization that the philosophy of integration as espoused by Blueprint puts the onus for delivering service to students with special needs back on the schools themselves rather than on central programs. This is an administrative issue, and, therefore, it is not surprising that this theme was expressed only by the Principals/Designates.

Improved Administrative Efficiency

Another theme mentioned by the Principals/Designates is that an approach like Blueprint's has made the tracking of students with special needs more "systematic". It should be noted here that there are other policy initiatives which converge with Blueprint -- namely, the setting up of other school-based teams for Early Identification and Curriculum Management. It seems that some schools use the same team for all three purposes, or teams with overlapping membership. One school did mention that paperwork is reduced by half but, as mentioned later, this has not been every school's experience.

Positive Reaction from Parents

Some interviewees reported that parents were reacting positively to Blueprint. One glowing comment from a parent was reported as "we've learned more about our kid than we have in the last five years". Some of the SERTs reported a positive, supportive reaction from parents who prefer the speedier

service, as well as the "efficient personal approach", delivered under Blueprint. A number of comments were made underlining the importance of maintaining good communication with parents in order to gain their support.

Positive Reaction from Students with Special Needs

Approximately 80 per cent of the SERTs' comments made in response to the question about the students' reaction were positive. In general, the SERTs reported that students feel very pleased about having the SERT in the classroom to help them. The students who need support seemed more willing to take chances in the classroom when the SERT was there.

Although a question was not asked in the interview for Principals/Designates about the students' reactions to Blueprint, several spontaneous comments were made on this topic. These comments were divided, some believing that students prefer to remain in the classroom to receive support, and others believing that students prefer the individualized attention that comes with withdrawal. A number of comments expressed the belief that integration is better for the self-esteem of students with special needs.

2. Concerns about Blueprint

Issues Concerning the Continuum of Service

A substantial number of comments were made that indicate some apprehension about how Blueprint affects the overall continuum of Special Education service. There is a real concern that withdrawal will be done away with entirely. Many Principals/Designates and SERTs commented that there is a need for withdrawal for some students; particularly those students whose problems are not severe enough for referral to special programs but are too serious for the regular teacher to handle as part of the regular class teaching. A few comments were made that indicate that some students definitely prefer withdrawal.

Many interviewees agreed that Blueprint offers a way to deliver more support to more students, but there was a concern about whether the referral process to IPRC has been slowed down. Some schools, on the other hand, felt that it has actually been speeded up. There was also a fear that the emphasis on integration will mean that the exceptional student will be forgotten; that is, that all exceptional students will be "dumped" back into the classroom.

A number of specific issues were brought up. For example: Are Special Ed teachers trained enough to integrate exceptional students back into the classroom? Can busing be changed? Will Special Ed teachers eventually have

no more students in their segregated classes? There was also a perception that Blueprint is not reducing the number of students referred to Central Programs. Another fear was the possibility of adverse effects on the regular students, especially in the case of the possible re-integration of exceptional students.

Need for Individualized Approach Based on Each School's Specific Needs

The Principals/Designates felt that up to now Blueprint has addressed all the schools together in large groups and tried to "hit everybody the same". Some of the SERTs echoed this sentiment by warning against making Blueprint too "formalized" or "rigid". Many interviewees felt it is now time to use a more "grassroots" approach -- that is, to address each school's particular needs (e.g., staffing needs and student population are different from school to school). It was also apparent to the interviewees that some schools were much further ahead with integration in their schools compared to other schools in the system.

Senior Schools were specifically mentioned as requiring special attention because they are different in their approach and organization. For example, Senior Schools are seen as more curriculum-oriented than child-centered and, therefore, not predisposed toward curriculum adaptation to accomodate individual needs.

Need for More Inservice

Approximately half the comments made by the SERTs to the question about the adequacy of inservice were positive, stating that the inservices were excellent, especially the sessions on Consultation and Observation skills.

There was a general feeling that the inservices to date with the school support teams were too general and not individualized enough. There was also a feeling that the content of the inservices were sometimes "out of whack" with where the teams were (e.g., "too specific last year, too general this year").

Some comments were made that indicated that both the school support teams and the SERTs need more information about available resource materials as well as intervention strategies. There was some indication that academic problems are easier to deal with than behavioural problems, and there were some requests for more inservicing around the "concrete" aspects of providing intervention assistance to teachers (e.g., more "Make and Take" and "Storefront" sessions).

Finally, the point was made and often repeated that the regular teachers should receive some inservicing around Blueprint.

Concern about Level of Expertise Required by the SERTs

The Principals/Designates were aware that the SERTs are under a lot of pressure to deliver in areas in which they are just beginning to get some competence. Of particular concern was the reticence that SERTs are feeling about dealing with severe and behavioural cases. Some SERTs expressed uncertainty about intervening with students who had emotional or behavioural problems.

Procedural Problems

A few comments were made indicating occasional problems determining what the proper procedure is to accomplish certain things in the classroom – e.g., How to evaluate students in different settings? What to do if one is in the classroom during a math period to work on a student's reading problems? Some SERTs also stated that clarification was required from Blueprint about their reporting responsibilities concerning the students they see.

Most of the teams recognized that the team-building process is ongoing and adaptive to changing circumstances; for example, when some members leave and have to be replaced. There is also the issue mentioned before that the schools have other teams operating (i.e., Early Identification, Curriculum Management). In many cases the memberships of these teams were the same or at least overlapping.

Networking

The SERTs appreciated the opportunity to meet other SERTs from the pilot schools during the inservices and hoped that this could be ongoing. Representatives from the school support teams also hoped for more sharing and networking. Some interviewees suggested a mentoring relationship between the pilot schools and any new schools joining Blueprint.

3. Facilitators to the Blueprint Implementation

Staff Strengths

Some comments were made stressing the importance of well-trained staff (SERTs and members of the school support team) to gain credibility among the regular staff.

Staff Agreement with the Philosophy of Integration

Some comments were made that it was easier to work with staff who agreed with the philosophy of integration.

School Culture

Various comments were made that point to the fact that certain school philosophies are more conducive to implementing Blueprint. These include an activity-based program, or an emphasis on students as individuals (i.e., child-centered versus curriculum-oriented approach). There was some concern about how some of the new curriculum initiatives impact on Blueprint -- are they congruent or conflicting in philosophy? The presence of school organizational "structure" to expedite the implementation process is also seen as important.

Team-Based Consultation

Because Blueprint is centered on a team-based approach to consultation, previous experience with multi-disciplinary teams helps facilitate the implementation of Blueprint.

Administrative Support

A few comments were made that the support from CAPS and SOs has been encouraging to these pilot schools.

One interview group of SERTs stressed that although the [school] administration said they were supportive, "SERTs carry the ball the whole way".

Support from Teachers

A substantial number of SERTs reported an accepting attitude from teachers, improved communication and even a "bonding" with teachers. Some teachers appeared to enjoy the increased collaboration with the SERTs; informal discussions were seen as important.

4. Difficulties with the Blueprint Implementation

Heavy Workload

Not surprisingly, the difficulty that received the most comment was the

increased workload that Blueprint has placed on the SERTs. The Principals/Designates were certainly aware of this, although most of their comments had to do with the increase in paperwork, primarily involving the school support team. The SERTs indicated that they felt that they were "spread too thin" -- the amount of work involved requires them to be "flexible" with their time. They also felt that their positions should be full-time; a half-time (0.5) appointment makes no sense given their new duties. The additional point was made that more students were being identified under Blueprint as in need for support (i.e., the mild cases). The SERTs made many comments about the difficulties around timetabling with teachers for consultation, especially as most teachers do not want to use their valuable prep time for these consultations. With the increased workload and the need to visit a number of classrooms, SERTs were finding it difficult to find enough prep time for themselves. It should also be noted that the SERTs in these schools are still carrying on their withdrawal room duties. As a consequence of the heavy workload introduced by Blueprint, most teams were also feeling overburdened and sometimes frustrated.

Regular Teachers: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership

Both Principals/Designates and SERTs were acutely aware that many regular teachers have not been brought on board with Blueprint. They sensed an attitude of "Every year more things are piled on the [teacher's] plate", and an overall impatience -- the teachers want to see good results immediately rather than let the process evolve over the long term. Some of the teaching staff were perceived as simply being against integration on principle. It was reported that in some schools staff members were apprehensive, or actually resentful, of the extra time necessary for carrying out the integration of students with special needs. Prep time was a very precious and jealously-guarded commodity.

It was also reported that some teachers still considered contacting the school support team as simply the first step to placement. The notion of preventive intervention assistance needs to be clarified to counteract this perception.

Role Negotiation and Conflict

Many comments reflected the fact that as the change in the role of the SERT goes from theory to reality, the SERT is involved in a process of role negotiation with other staff. The SERTs indicated that a lot of questions remain unanswered about the sharing of responsibilities, particularly with regular classroom teachers. The SERTs reported that some teachers were treating them as EA's or "glorified errand person[s]". There was also some uneasiness about what the SERTs should do if they feel that a regular classroom teacher is not doing a good job around classroom discipline.

Another issue that kept coming up is the SERTs' relationship with ESL. The SERTs felt that they were being pressured to take on students that need ESL support rather than support with academic or behavioural problems. They felt that they are being saddled with the overflow from ESL. Furthermore, the SERTs perceived that ESL has more resources than they do (i.e., relatively more ESL staff compared to SERTs assigned to the same amount of caseload).

Parents' Expectations or Desires

The SERTs indicated that some parents had strong desires either for withdrawal (believing that this means more individualized attention for their child) or for an integrated setting (believing that this makes the child happier). The schools have to contend with both of these strong preferences. Also, reporting to parents that their child is receiving in-class support was raising parents' expectations about the amount of that support; some parents wanted the Special Education teacher to help as well.

A few SERTs reported negative reactions from parents, primarily due to the parents' belief that more individualized support is available with pull-out programs.

Lack of Resources

The Principals/Designates indicated a general lack of resources to make Blueprint work. They stated that they need money and especially more staffing to get the job done.

5. Suggestions from the Participants

The following list is a summary of the suggestions made by the participants about how Blueprint can be made more effective.

1. Legitimize the Blueprint policy by explaining the philosophy of integration and the Blueprint approach to the regular teaching staff.

2. Validate the SERTs' new role by explaining it to the teachers, and by providing them with the time and resources they need to do the job.

3. Clarify to all staff that Blueprint does not endanger, but in fact promotes, a continuum of service to students with special needs.

4. Provide the mechanisms necessary to facilitate more networking and sharing of Blueprint experiences and strategies.

5. Address each school's individual needs during the implementation process; for example, each school's particular staffing needs or particular student population.

6. Deliver more practical inservice on intervention strategies and resources aimed at particular student problems and needs, as well as on developing interpersonal skills in dealing with other staff.

7. Provide more resources (money and staffing) to the schools.

APPENDIX A

Memos, Instructions and Protocols

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE CITY OF SCARBOROUGH

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Principals in Blueprint
Pilot Schools

DATE: November 26, 1990

FROM: Jim Farquhar
Associate Superintendent
Student and Community Services

SUBJECT: Focused Interviews Concerning Blueprint

Thank you for agreeing to help us in gathering information on the pilot project for Blueprint for the Future.

You or a member of your School Support Team will be joining us for lunch on Friday, November 30, in E31/32 from ll a.m. to 1 p.m. to discuss a number of questions pertinent to the project. If you designate someone, it should be someone other that the SERT. Attached you will find a list of issues for prior consideration and possible discussion with your team. You will also find a short survey for you to complete. Please bring the completed form to the lunch meeting.

We have also scheduled a lunch meeting with the SERTs involved with Blueprint to take place on December 3rd from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Attached you will find a list of issues to be discussed at this meeting. Please forward this list to the SERT in your school.

Once again, we appreciate your input at this time.

BLUEPRINT - FOCUSED INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPALS OR DESIGNATES

Issues To Be Discussed

- Perception of Blueprint: benefits and drawbacks
- Factors facilitating implementation
- Difficulties or constraints encountered
- Feelings of team toward Blueprint
- Reaction of staff to Blueprint

We encourage you to reflect on these issues before the meeting.

BLUEPRINT - FOCUSED INTERVIEWS WITH SERTs

Issues to be Discussed

- Perception of Blueprint: benefits and drawbacks
- SERTs new role
- Difficulties or constraints encountered
- SERT inservice
- Relationship to team, rest of the staff and parents

We encourage you to reflect on these issues before the meeting.

SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAMS

SHORT SURVEY

Instructions: Please complete this form and bring it to the interview on November 30th.

1. Who is on your school support team? (positions not names)

- Principal ☐
- Vice-principal ☐
- SERT (comp. teacher) ☐ How many? _____
- Support staff ☐ How many? _____
- Regular Teachers ☐ How many? _____
- Other (specify) ☐ _____

2. How frequent does the team meet?

- weekly ☐
- every 2 weeks ☐
- monthly ☐
- every few months ☐
- Other (specify) ☐ _____

3. Approximately how many children has the team discussed since September? _____

4.a) Has the staff been informed of the team and its purpose?

Yes . . . ☐ No . . . ☐

b) If yes, how?

- memo ☐
- staff meeting ☐
- informal discussion ☐
- Other (specify) ☐ _____

GENERAL PREAMBLE

1. A general welcome and thank you.

2. A short recap of what Blueprint is and the preparation of the 23 pilot schools have gone through.

3. Intention of core committee to table a report in the near future. Core committee's desire to include information about the experience of the pilot schools in attempting to implement Blueprint.

4. Interviewing in small groups is the most time-efficient way to collect this kind of information.

   There is no pattern to which group they are assigned.

5. The information will be confidential and anonymous. Answers will not be identified by person or by school. There is no hidden agenda. The questions parallel the list of issues they received earlier this week.

6. Each group has a moderator.

   The moderator's job is to present the question in order, to keep the discussion on track, to probe for clarification or elaboration, and to record the answers.

   It is important to heed their instructions in order to stay within the allotted time, and to ensure that the information is recorded accurately.

7. Introduce Bill, who is a research associate in the Research Centre. He has worked with the committee in the preparation of the interview, and he will be writing the report. Bill will visit each group for a short time to observe.

FOCUSED INTERVIEWS - BLUEPRINT

Guidelines for Interviewers

1. A focused interview is a systematic way of collecting data on a particular topic. In this case the focused interview is being conducted to discover how the school support teams/SERTS feel about the Blueprint and the Blueprint implementation at this stage in the process and to identify some examples of benefits of Blueprint and of constraints to its implementation.

2. Your role - Interviewers have a very specific role to play. They are there to collect data, not to judge or intervene in the discussion. This means that the interviewers are asking questions and recording responses but not giving any feedback or advice and not making any evaluative judgments.

3. Some hints:

   * Review the procedures and questions before you start.
   * Sit facing the group and arrange your papers so that you can make eye contact with everyone.
   * Relax and enjoy yourself.
   * Don't forget the preamble.
   * Ask all of the questions in the order they are listed.
   * Don't be afraid to cut them off or repeat a question to focus an answer. If they jump ahead, remind them that there are other questions to come that address the issue.
   * Use extended questions if you need to.
   * Remember that you are there to gather data, not to engage in the discussion.
   * Use your own shorthand to get down the comments that people make. For significant points, take quotes and record them with quotation marks.
   * If you can't keep up, ask them to stop until you get the information down.
   * Don't discuss the answers or reflect on them with the participants in any way, even after the interview is completed.
   * Remember the interview itself is only half the process. Once it is completed, take a few minutes to reconstruct the answers and translate your shorthand notes.
   * Don't discuss the results afterwards.

MODERATOR'S PREAMBLE

Hi! My name is _____ and I will be the moderator for this group. My job is to ask you some questions, to make sure that everyone gets a chance to talk, and to keep the discussion on track. I may ask you to clarify or expand on what you say. While you're talking, I'm going to record your answers, I may ask you to repeat something or to pause so I can record what you have said accurately. We have about an hour to get through this, so please listen carefully to the questions, and try to target your answers to the specific question under consideration.

We want to hear about your own particular experiences, and your feelings and ideas concerning each question. So even if you agree with what is being said don't just say "I agree", give us your perceptions. Have your say but try to stay on topic. Also, feel free to comment on other people's responses. I may interrupt if the discussion is getting off track.

I would like to emphasize again that we want to hear from each one of you. To make sure this happens I may direct questions to different people.

Let's start with some general questions about your perception of Blueprint.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview with Principals or Designates

1. What do you see as the benefits in Blueprint?

2. Tell me about any drawbacks that you see in Blueprint.

3. What factors have facilitated the implementation so far?

4. Describe any difficulties or constraints that you've encountered so far in the implementation.

5. How is the support team feeling about Blueprint right now?

6. What has the reaction of the rest of the school staff been to the team and to Blueprint generally?

7. Have you had any comments or reactions from parents?

8. Are there any other things that you think ought to be mentioned about the early stages of Blueprint implementation?

Interview with SERTs

1. What do you see as the benefits of Blueprint?

2. Tell me about any drawbacks that you can see in Blueprint.

3. How has your role changed since you got involved in the Blueprint pilot?

4. What parts of the SERT role have you been able to implement so far?

5. Describe any difficulties or constraints that you've encountered so far.

6. Have the inservice sessions helped you acquire the skills that you need for this role? Are there any other skills that you feel you need?

7. What is your involvement with the school support team?

8. What impact has the implementation of Blueprint, particularly the change in your role, had on your relationship with the rest of the staff?

9. How have parents reacted to the change in your role?

10. How have students reacted to the change in your role?

11. Do you have any suggestions to the Blueprint planning team for facilitating the SERT role in the

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APPENDIX B

Specific Comments as Recorded By the Interview Moderators

FOCUSED INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPALS OR DESIGNATES

1. What do you see as the benefits in Blueprint?

- *Expansion of Role of SERT*

- SERT more involved in whole curriculum
- more professional growth for both SERT and regular class teachers
- SERT able to service all children in the school
- SERT - more time spent in classroom to help both child and teacher
- SERT in regular class is facilitating several other teachers
- the way the teacher teaches and the next stage of integration comes from the kids and the nature of the program needed [i.e. programming is child-centered] the change in program works when working with the teacher in the classroom
- can service more kids; before one, now 8 to 10
- curriculum implementation - sharing dialogue - more apt to try something different (e.g. process writing)
- other students served than those identified
- increases repertoire of classroom teacher for evaluation and programme
- teacher used to having someone in and out of classroom for benefit of child's programming - not seen as teacher evaluation

- *Improved Collaboration and Communication*

- shared ownership of pupil's education
- changed tone in staff room - more consultation - know they have support
- collaboration of staff - shared responsibility of regular grade teacher and special program teacher
- Blueprint models reinforce staff - ideas, can talk one to one
- not pressure - shared ownership - productive role
- classroom teacher is supported - has another avenue to use for help
- more collaboration to meet needs of individual students
- pulling staff together (e.g. French/English), support team is represented by both groups
- more dialogue among teachers
- collaborative program
- encourages, supports team teaching approach
- enhances collegiality and co-operation
- scope and quality of parent-teacher communication increases
- teachers are not working in isolation - more like team teaching
- support team good - can draw from members a variety of strengths
- school support team aspect of brainstorming and hearing other teachers

- *School-based Ownership for Special Education*

- legitimizes program in special program schools and schools that are not special program [i.e. promotes special education services overall]
- one school integrating special program kids 100%
- less pressure on Student Services Dept. - School team is responsible - more pressure on schools
- before, a difficult kid was automatically referred, now it is delayed - eliminates process - responsibility within school
- schools can service own students not send them somewhere else
- school support team focus for choice of service is through school, programme

- *Improved Staff Perception of Students with Special Needs*

- staff has more positive feelings when talking about students
- affective change for classroom teacher when dealing with student who has mild to moderate difficulties
- more global view of child
- teacher looking at child as an individual
- changes perception of student with special needs

- *Social and Emotional Benefits to Students*

- social and emotional advantages for integrated students
- enhances self-esteem of students integrated into classroom - they feel good and accepted
- students kept with peer group
- environment for kid has changed and improved

- *Improved Administrative Efficiency*

- systematic way of tracking kids
- less paperwork as you become more involved - "less paperwork than we ever did - about half!"
- tracking helps evaluation of these kids (meetings and paperwork)
- one team can track 3 or 4 areas, e.g. ESL, Early I.D., Special Ed. - tidies it up administratively

2. Tell me about any drawbacks that you see in Blueprint.

- *Heavy Workload*

- more paperwork - notekeeping - tracking - can be positive but more paper! $ too
- overload on Comp. Teacher SERT (see Difficulties)
- more time - more tracking
- "Before Blueprint all paperwork - less benefits"
- prep. time coverage
- paperwork needs to be streamlined dramatically - for everyone - team, resource teacher etc. etc.
- needs to be lot less paper but still need communication with parents etc.
- number of students in schools slows down process for placement, bogs down teachers - continuity of program in question
- tracking is fuzzier
- monitoring a huge job need more office staff. Secretary hates to see principal coming with so many necessary letters to parents, follow up etc.

- *Need for Individualized Approach Based on Each School's Specific Needs*

- concern with questions - at different stages
- some have plunked Special Education kids in regular grade full time others have done it more slowly over 2 - 3 years
- Blueprint shouldn't be universal at this point [all agreed - too many concerns still]
- mechanism of needs assessment in each school - is there one? will there be guidelines?
- at the grass roots - models and how to be aimed here rather than large group and try to "hit" everybody the same - How to incorporate models different from school to school and should be handled by school.
- depends on school needs (problems) - other needed social worker a lot
- let schools decide needs for allocation of specific personnel.
- programme assisted schools need totally different staffing
- we may need resources for only part of the year, e.g., - extra social worker for 2 months
- pie is only so big so need to look at resources and have more flexibility
- Blueprint wouldn't work unless turned the school into an active learning site

- *Regular Teachers: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- ownership back to classroom teacher by frustration here - not equipped or trained to deal with it - idea is good but "in reality this doesn't happen, only in theory".
- teacher not happy with role in Blueprint model
- convincing staff than integration can be done

- hard to get teachers who have a specific focus to change - especially in senior public school - these not child centred (curriculum based) - difficult to change perceptions and attitudes. These teachers feel students should be withdrawn versus being integrated.
- dynamics of classroom changing - classroom teachers' job is much more challenging

- *Issues Concerning the Continuum of Service*

- Blueprint needs clarity - how to integrate kids - how models of service should be handled - long slow process
- we need clarity as to where we are headed
- made more progress in some cases on old withdrawal method
- need Central Program in every school. SLD + ADJ, EA, SERT in one Resource Room - Team 5 -6 kids go there every one else (teachers) circulate-had to integrate in junior, intermediate classes -large classes already
- ESL students already integrated
- supply teacher with integrated students - problems for principal
- kids getting more coming out to be boosted in withdrawal
- but need more - can't do away with withdrawal completely - if can't read Grade 7/8 [student] needs to go to withdrawal
- nowhere does it say you can't withdraw
- short term pain for long term gain - 23 teachers. improve in use of SST etc. will cut down on referrals. Teachers are using neighbours to problem solve.

- *Concern about the Level of Expertise Required*

- Trained Staff - big concern - "killing our Comp Teachers", overwhelmed by level of expertise required in <u>all</u> areas.
- staffing implications must be dealt with
- "shudder to think what would happen if trained staff were not in my school".
- must have <u>right</u> people working together
- pressure on classroom teacher is great - need for special training - could be drain on our resources, i.e., equipment, supply teachers
- skills base built at school with regular teachers' base built over years but dealing with difficult specific needs ... psychologist and social worker need a few people to call on for expertise [they meant flexibility of "area service" according to needs - support people going to areas most needed]
- difficult to convince staff until well trained
- if had 9 rookie teachers would need programming support but if have experienced teachers - different needs
- Comp Teacher frustration - evaluation of kids "don't know if I've helped that child at all" - comment from integration (in class) with regular teacher
- more and more children having difficulty with social skills

- *Role Negotiation and Conflict*

- what is role of Itinerant? [Role of SLD, ADJ very unclear]
- role of Itin. should be reviewed - "spread too thin"
- Comp Teacher sometimes feels like an EA
- school psychologists only used for testing gifted in our school - need different access to other support personnel

- *Lack of Resources*

- project to policy yet?
- mechanism of how to access resources to let Blueprint function properly in building - what are they?
- some schools not getting enough resources
- feel out of sync. as Blueprint school with Scarborough Board need refocusing with central office - revaluation - need to consider placement/allocation and use of present resources. Some resources in place no longer needer others are not available. - e.g. Special Ed. Lang. show up once every 2 weeks for a few kids - needed more regularly e.g. SLD needed every week 2-3 days per week
- need a full time guidance person not another comp. teacher.
- give us some money to do this - we got a little - Thank you -but we are going to need more - need to give teachers more of what they want.

- *Need for More Inservice*

- staff & comp teacher need more specific strategies - too time consuming
- in-services ineffective - too large groups - more consultation Teacher to Teacher - Principal to Principal
- academic self-esteem good but not when <u>team</u> tries to deal with severe behaviour problems they run out of strategies
- inservicing time, overlap of inservicing

3. What factors have facilitated the implementation so far?

- *Staff Strengths and Commitment to Philosophy of Integration*

- staff that you've got and the background and training of these teachers is crucial
- Support Staff are there and easier to access
- all teachers saw opportunity to have children serviced by comp teacher in some way
- comp. teachers will be well used
- SERT became real support/resource for staff - SERT really strong
- staff responded to need
- Training Program at Assessment Centre great <u>but</u> not used all the time

- willingness of staff to co-operate with Blueprint
- commitment of SERT - now In-Service teachers
- staff keen to try new model
- willingness and capabilities of staff to look for new way to service students
- at first strongly principal driven but supportive core of teachers - they supported and perceived the need
- we were already committed to two other pilots we wanted to keep up to date. Running of pilot done by V.P. and Comp. staff - supervision of paper flow supervised by principal. Depends on comp. teacher. and their needs.

- *School Culture*

- easier to implement Blueprint models if using an Activity Based program rather than traditional lecture method
- structure must be changed in school to make program easier
- creation of school atmosphere - children are individuals
- school promotion of integration for French/English, ESL and Special Education students
- school's need to promote some philosophy as social agencies on integration - segregation not working
- teachers talking at lunchtime and recess
- good opportunities for communication teacher to teacher, parent to teacher.

- *Team-Based Consultation*

- school support team "need to have a vision, start big and think small". We have a very large support team. At first the teachers found it intimidating. But now works. Need to have psych., SLD, ADJ, SOC. WK for each ends up with a referral. Their experience is valuable to the team. Picked up ideas, extremely helpful. Teacher gets ideas. Teacher comes out with help and ideas. Some money - it helped. inservice as a staff - memos staff meeting psychologist and comp teachers very helpful to staff
- ours was opposite to this. Very easy because teacher already going in to classrooms. But we didn't have a team in place until became part of Blueprint.
- we had a team first - so it was easy to easier with a team or in class support in place.

- *Administrative Support*

- good administrative support by CAP & SO - helps to keep kids in mainstream
- positive support of CAPS and itinerants

4. Describe any difficulties or constraints that you've encountered so far in the implementation.

- *Heavy Workload*

- timetable - tricky - always "shifting gears"
- labour intensive
- more full time comp. teacher
- difficult timetabling for SERT - especially 0.5 comp. teachers
- SERT needs to have unscheduled time
- SERT has too much paper work - can't do it
- paperwork is too heavy
- with increased prep time comp and regular teacher need more time to work together with other than lunch hour or after school
- timetabling is a problem - how do we work around our children with needs. We have difficulty establishing regular routines, consistency
- time and staffing - the resource teacher needs time to get around. But some children need to be withdrawn. Resource teachers can't do both without and staff is difficult if not impossible to do a good job. In increasing number of students are being identified, need 36 hour day. Once the regular teachers buy in then they want the resource teacher there.
- difficult to tap resources of support staff
- utilizing support staff - not easy to get support staff at team meeting
- use regular budget for Special Ed program and materials - use SERT to gather info on materials -time required to do this assembling of info and materials

- *Problems with Inservice*

- inappropriate In-Service "shot-gun" apprcach
- In-service O.K. for some but inappropriate for others.
- order of In-services out of whack ["what we got this year we should have gotten last year and vice versa - too specific last year, too general this year"]
- In-Services too large - should be more individualized - CAP & Resource Teachers should be doing this with school and staff
- time for inservicing
- duplication of inservicing - turn off
- inservicing not specific - too long a time period for what one got out of it
- everyone was inserviced at different times i.e., principal, SERT
- in-services not great - some advanced, some too late, wrong order, not enough support for inservice

- *Need for an Individualized Approach Based on Each School's Specific Needs*

- where schools are now is where you start

- "I've closed this [integration] programme for nothing".
- Senior School integration is very different
- do it [inservicing] in the setting - each school at different stage - find out what works and what doesn't according to school
- inservicing needs to be specific - meet needs of individual schools
- inservice staff - every school is different and their needs are different

- *Issues Concerning the Continuum of Service*

- pressure to integrate before student is ready
- discourages kid who needs short term service from getting help
- in Sp. Ed. class teacher not trained enough to get kid back to main stream
- must use withdrawal too
- should check to see if kid needs Sr. School or K-8 placement
- mold all kids into program?
- individual needs of pupil must be looked at carefully
- perception that Special class teacher have no kids to teach - all integrated
- bussing is a concern - can it be changed?
- difficult integrating all children e.g., multiple handicapped
- large number of kids in ESL and Special Ed.
- longer time for Central now
- just as many central as before
- we have increased number of students identified - more than ever before. Before just identified serious, now identify a lot of other needs.
- Blueprint slows down placement if needed - would have taken place earlier under old system

[not all concurred on this - some tension within group on this person's perspective - told him outright that he must be doing something wrong!]

- there is a problem especially in the senior public schools, with evaluation. Teachers, when they are working in the class, work with two or three students and they end up with better marks than the rest - i.e., the 50% students. So these 50% students now need support.
- parent concern that students are in segregated classes for long time

- *Lack of Resources*

- not given much - "Want a Champagne Program on a Beer Budget"
- need full time person to handle all priorities
- preparation of staff
- increased staffing, increased inservicing of regular class teachers
- needs of school are great - do not have staff to meet needs
- need money, staff
- money/staffing/numbers of kids to be serviced
- materials, supplies not available i.e., manipulative, computers
- not enough money - should be looked at
- class size

- we have made it work instead of demanding more much needed time

- *Concern about Level of Expertise Required by the SERT*

- Comp Teacher too stressed - too many programs too much expertise needed
- Comp Teacher must be a "diplomat superior"
- professional development problems
- we have the regular teachers accepting the idea (of class support) but comp teachers reluctant to deal with more severe students
- starting to withdraw them again. These comp teachers are tentative with more severe problems.
- behaviour kids are an increasing difficulty, no safety net to cover students who crash and burn or are derailed

- *Role Negotiation and Conflict*

- ESL not on base - can this be clarified and can they collaborate
- in our school we grouped our ESL and comp students in classes so they would have support for language/reading but then the classroom teacher had them, unsupported, for the rest of the day.
- schools need to be staffed properly so SERT doesn't have to cover classes in emergencies
- whose program do you program around?

- *Regular Teachers: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- expectations of classroom teachers must change
- more and more pressure on classroom teachers

- *Parents' Expectations or Desires*

- in middle class area - pressure from parents is greater in Blueprint

- *Other*

- [Name of school] has integrated SLD and central SLD - so one can act as safety net. SERT is doing it in our school - stops comp program and withdraws SLD students removed from class.
- a restraint is that as the system has been changing a number of things have been changing. E.g., the setting and program have to be student centered in order for the Blueprint to work. As the teachers change their programming we have students lost in the shuffle. We have a high percentage of students at the Grade 3 that are now showing up as non readers. [someone asked - can you blame this on the Blueprint or are there other factors to consider?] I'm not knocking it (Blueprint) but when you change things as we did ... We had an unexpected number of Grade 3's going through tracking because of reading.

- I would like to add the consideration of 'weighting'. When we consider what we have said I would like to point out that the weighting should be 80 pro (benefits of Blueprint) and 20 con (drawbacks). None of the drawbacks out-weigh the benefits side of the equation. I wouldn't want those as considered equal. We need to do something. That Grade 3 year is a serious problem. Reading through active learning is good but these students are illiterate when they are tested. They can communicate and write stories but they don't test (as literate). More kids are not getting the training or support at home. But we are getting as high as one third non-readers in each of our Grade 3 classes. We are a new area, but this is not just ESL.

5. How is the support team feeling about Blueprint right now?

- *Team-Based Consultation*

- support team is feeling great - very positive
- realistic but still cautious of program and long and short term results or implications
- Core Team committed - planning is key to success
- outcome - maintaining but not necessarily creating miracles
- we feel really positive with the suggestions and the support staff. A lot of business is transacted over coffee or lunch. It is good for the teachers -- they hear the conversation and pipe up, "Oh yeah, I have the same problem".

- *Heavy Workload*

- frustrated - losing a handle on the kids - the time involved is increasing/overwhelming
- disjointed - where are we going? Lots of time put in but not getting anywhere
- team fine but staff apprehensive - large classes, don't have resources
- not enough time to dialogue
- staff is divided - SERTS - others will have to deal with these kids as well
- team positive but not having time to get together to talk to teacher and time for observation, not supporting teacher as well as they would like
- we feel we need more time to dialogue
- my partner needs a half day before the meeting and then an hour after to make something of it. We are using our lunches all of the time now
- the team is enthusiastic, but they lack the time. Lunch time is not long enough in the senior school to communicate with other teachers that need it.
- lack of resources for Support Team

- minimized paper work
- Support Team - overworked, especially SERTS - used for coverage - supply teachers.

- *Issues Concerning the Continuum of Service*

- accepting a lot more students - but should check with staff about this
- less referrals to Special class than before Support Team
- affects more kids - <u>but</u> uses same staff
- more referrals to Support Team - than prior referrals
- other schools felt process of referral was speeded up
- others felt it was backed up - wanted action when kids brought to meeting - but other Resource personnel backed up too
- barriers broken down - between Special Ed. kids and regular class kids, dealing with kids as effectively as possible and don't worry about labels - <u>flexibility is key</u>
- Blueprint must take labels off kids
- maybe we should have a Central Program in each school - this would help kids who needed contained class on a short-term long-term basis <u>or</u> have a travelling team
- IPRC will change under Blueprint - labels again, each school will have own kids to deal with
- new school - receiving Principal should be at CIPRC
- don't feel that anything has changed this year
- the perception of our team by the other teachers is that this is still a step to placement. The teams perception isn't this.
- a case conference is the last resort for getting kids out now.
- "<u>at what expense</u>" are we trying to do this with regular students, e.g., very disruptive ADJ student integrated into regular class <u>or</u> time spent in SLD kids in regular class, so that time is not spent with regular kids [great concern about this]
- frustration - keep lid on, but would prefer to make changes early on to prevent the problem
- effectiveness is minimized if we don't do anything at an early age (pre school)

- *Procedural Problems*

- the Support Team in most schools has been modified - rarely all resource support - usually smaller group - in school, meets monthly and calls in extra support staff three or four times a year
- repeat process because of new people coming on board to join team
- new people on staff - more work - meeting with more people - everyone at different stage of teaching experience
- educating new members of staff
- our support team structure will have to change. What we had was good but we will have to change to just one, we had three. Staff see the team as good, has flexibility.
- if we empower the team to get on with the job and then they have to

stop to do Early Identification, etc., it isn't good.
- as the children (population) move around the composition of the team may have to change,. For instance at xxxxx ... but at xxxxx [it is] a real problem.
- "Chris [moderator] can you tell me if they plan to do away with the three track system?"[i.e. Special Ed, ESL, Early I.D. teams] [I said I couldn't participate, just record]. He rephrased it. "Well the three track system needs to be looked at. Are you considering moving to one system?"

- *Concern about Level of Expertise Required by the SERTs*

- must train or hire expert teachers SERTS
- untrained, therefore, no credibility among staff

- *Networking*

- give staff and team time to get out and observe what others are doing
- can twin schools for programming strategies
- Family of Schools - advanced in Blueprint could mentor or twin with schools just beginning or not as advanced

- *Regular Teachers: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- team positive, staff reluctant to follow through on suggestions
- team supportive but whole staff breakdown not part of whole experience - see some help but not necessarily seen as the most important help
- teachers are saying okay, I'll try it but its not going to work
- it's a slow process. The resource teacher must make an alliance. The reluctant teacher tried it out, team teaching and co-operative planning sessions. We gave them resources, books, money to spend. This hard-to-crack teacher is not an example to convince others.
- is program modified going to be ongoing - that's a major focus
- I only had one teacher kicking and screaming. (Only one said another?)
- not everyone has the same perceptions of Blueprint that is the problem
- it doesn't matter what your interpretation is. I has to work for you.

- *Other*

- frustration - problem identified - know what is happening (e.g., child tired, hungry) - [but these are] factors that can't be changed
- debriefing [with SERT partner] is difficult because all of the kids are still there
- there are a decreased number of reviews for it ongoing in the hall.

- "using the basic analogy of Blueprint, meetings.... basic structure remarkably coherent but the furnishings and artwork from school to school are dramatically different"

6. What has the reaction of the rest of the school staff been to the team and to Blueprint generally?

- *Heavy Workload*

- means extra students in class - no extra staffing
- "all the good will in the work will not sustain them" - staff needs resources, money, extra teachers, etc.
- list of students for review keeps piling up [other members of group said this school was mismanaging their caseload then]

- *Regular Teacher: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- has changed focus of school "out of dark ages" into 90's
- some staff threatened by integration of special students, will they get support, physical and program
- range of reaction is 'on board to nowhere' in every school - apprehension apparent
- time is a problem for staff [regular teachers] - when to plan for extra Special students - all prep taken up in this - became resentful

- *Staff Agreement with the Philosophy of Integration*

- SERT collaborates with teachers regarding kids' programs
- plan together, frequent discussions formal and informal, strategies and resources
- finds a more casual approach to discuss kids is important

- *Procedural Problems*

- where does ESL fit in? - how much - is there double service here
- in Sr. schools - monthly grade meetings also include student reviewed - act like support team.

- *Regular Staff Need Inservice*

- supportive of team - but not of Blueprint. In-services -- in some schools staff refuses to attend any further
- drawback to in-service, wanted more practicality, really liked the Store Fronts, want that extended to Make and Take sessions, want something they can use right away - practice.

- *Other*

- one principal speaks to each teacher three times a year about how each student is doing (academically, socially, emotionally, and physically)
- what are ethics of discussing confidential information
- parents should know that their child will be discussed at Support Team meeting.

7. Have you had any comments or reactions from parents?

- *Positive Reaction from Parents*

- positive comments from parents of kids in special classes - but some apprehension [concerning whether] integration would work for their kid
- parent quote "finally took my advice" when child was integrated
- very positive
- we have had positive reactions from parents, a real increase in communication, the teacher calls after each meeting as well as before and she calls again after five weeks
- a direct quote from a parent "we've learned more about my kid than we have in the last five years."

- *Importance of Good Communication with Parents*

- parents need reassurance regarding program and backup facts
- not an issue as long as teacher keeps parents informed
- after each case conference talk to the parents and put it in writing, any recommendations made. Assists with the follow-up. We can check the parent got the request done. Parents can see what is happening, what is being done for their child. We also have to be very clear about our plan of action and follow through as professionals. Get our own act in gear.
- yes and all of these are positive calls. They include: we are trying, we have tried, this worked etc.
-"this is how you can help at home", good teacher practice, focused.
- parents know you know the child. Strategies they will try at home, visa versa

- *Parents' Expectations or Desires*

- want the Special Ed. teacher to help their kids with reading, math
- the parents see we are really trying to help the child. Gave example of reassignments of adjusting child who had been demitted and after presentation from the team parent involved and agreed to reassignment. (comment here about the difference of perceptions about

student behaviour from school to school).
- the kids change around so much what often happens to reporting is that comp. support is written on the report as will be given, this raises parent expections. We are spending a lot of time with parents trying to resolve this (when we have such a caseload in comp that the student cannot receive the amount of support as promised)
- several parents wanted child in withdrawal because it was better - one-to-one, more attention and better and faster results - more academic gains
- both sides - want child to have individual attention - some refused withdrawal services of Special Ed. teacher but don't mind service in integration model
- parents who had initial problems with Blueprint were now more accepting - especially those who wanted no special class placement - they see kids from special classes are being successful
- every parents' wish for kid who requires special class, to have this but remain in home school (refer back to Central Program in each school)
- parents pleased [because] the student is happy about not being pulled from the class, so parents glad
- some parents don't want testing - remove test results from OSR
- an example of how the system can assist students when the parents won't allow testing or special placement. The child is serviced without labelling or withdrawal. Teacher can include the child with other students when working in the class.
- kindergarten parents not send kids to school with Special Ed. classes - can't get good education with special kids in their classes

- *Other*

- continuum of service - intervention will be minimal in future - - Blueprint trying to do this
- no comments from Special ed. parents
- we need to raise this issue as what should go on the report card as to how much service

8. Are there any other things that you think ought to be mentioned about the early stages of Blueprint implementation?

- *Lack of Resources*

- need more support - resources/money/staffing/day care - ESL - in primary grades it focuses here-maybe less need later
- full time comp. teacher
- money
- time
- staffing
- money for implementing Blueprint
- money for staff to go out for dinner to discuss own

implementation
- no time to do everything - getting worse
- Special Ed. taking up to 40% of principal's time
- make sure you can provide the resources. You've got to make sure somehow, that you can provide the resources. THAT THEY GET WHAT THEY NEED
- we are caught with the numbers
- we need another comp.
- we don't need another full-time guidance
- we need comp. and a full time secretary
- we could create another half-time comp. but it would increase class size
- I told them they could have 25 kids or an SLD teacher -- they choose (25 kids)

- *Networking*

- dichotomy - two inservices for Blueprint on Feb. 15, some principals want to run inservices in own schools, staff being fragmented
- staff needs to just get together and talk
- co-ordination of departments - "meetings to death"
- meetings done in less time
- initial meetings fine for overall philosophy
- Admin. element (Special Ed.) should be co-ordinated with the Program Department. Need to talk to each other and learn how to do it. Good on philosophy but not on representing. Should be like the JK-4 presentation where the philosophy and in-servicing skills are equal. The staff heard three different messages, SERT, principals all had different communications. The views presented were different.
- Supervisory Officers need to understand Blueprint - principals gone out of way to know what is going on
- Supervisory Officers should be more involved
- start small - getting every one on board. Providing the time, e.g., the comp teacher has the opportunity to work with the regular teacher, one half day to plan strategies.

- *Need for Individualized Approach Based on Each School's Specific Needs*

- inservice in schools - needs of schools are different
- get ideas from schools as to what would work in their school - support their needs
- ingredients from successful integration - how to implement in their school
- help with individual needs of school - not getting what is really needed
- each is different (school) and has different needs. Some want secretarial help or budget to supply it. As a school they want to choose which resources they want to access according to needs. They want to choose how to use resources.
- interaction with schools involved before inservices are set up

- join schools to talk about issues

- *Need for More Inservice*

- in-service should reflect up to date educational practices i.e., jig saw - not lectures
- if to opt into the pilot program the whole staff needs to be involved from the beginning. Inservice the staff as a whole group then break it down.
- the whole staff inservice was last this time

- *Other*

- continuum and less emphasis on grades in Primary Language program.
- support teacher through mock support team meeting or visitation to teams which are operational.
- those with additional kids have the advantage of having three or four adults in their class (at times) makes a big difference

Extra Input: Reaction of Students to Blueprint

- kids are elated - talk and smile
- parents are told by kids
- older students prefer integration model - don't miss social aspect of own classroom
- some loved and missed total withdrawal - some hated withdrawal and liked new integration and felt less embarrassed
- no stigma - everyone gets special help
- child improves self-esteem - perception of others changes - more accepting
- more confident - can talk to them
- [student] had control over when someone helped him. He asked for help.
- dramatic shift in self-esteem and tension level [lowered]
- are they gaining self-esteen when they cannot do the work?
- kids feel much better about selves, and at least be competitive, but when so far from norm
- kids at Grades 4 to 8 can identify that they are having problems - they feel good to be able to get help when needed, and still be part of class for everything else. Gets them organized - whole group benefits

FOCUSED INTERVIEW WITH SERTs

1. What do you see as the benefits in Blueprint?

- *Expansion of Role of SERT*

- with integration the SERT gets to know so many more kids than they did on strictly withdrawal method.
- SERT able to touch base with other students who need some help
- SERT able to see child and also siblings across the board - see clearer broader picture
- facilitate more students because when the SERT is in the class he/she can see all the students necessary
- teacher's view (SERT) - there was a lot of professional growth for me through communication, it was a clarification and confirmation of my philosophy
- SERT eliminate the urgency of getting the kids out of the class. They are problem solving in the class with in class support teacher's needs are being met. Don't demand withdrawal or special placement
- some teachers are gaining confidence. They are taking the lead. I am taking more of a guiding role. I feel a bit uncomfortable.

- continuum of programming - extensions in all areas of programming including enrichment.
- there are all stages of developmental learning in every classroom and different stages are looked after by the classroom teacher
- all kids are working to own degree of ability
- in class get to teach whole class at times and this keeps the SERT in touch with regular program and the special students as well
- support team provide strategies, program ideas
- members of support team present different perspectives
- there are more in-class mechanisms to help the students. They are seen more regularly. They are seen more regularly. There is more input before final testing.
- number of behaviourial changes in students because there are more people to help them
- I know the students better than when I react on a one-to-one

- earlier I.D. of kid's problems in class with integration
- can see what a kid does on a regular basis when working on integrated model
- earlier identification - SERT sees child one-on-one can see more accurately where difficulties lie
- the children are identified better because of the team. Teachers are observing and bringing forth students for consideration.
- the other side is that we are identifying better, quicker. We are able to take kids that only really need it to be central.
- team approach cutting down on referrals for formal testing

- *Improved Collaboration and Communication*

- good communication among staff, between staff and school support team
- whole staff co-operates and classroom teacher is part of a team for planning
- responsibility for student is shared by all staff, not just a few
- there is team decision making in the school
- sharing of ideas - collaborative
- trust must develop between SERT and classroom teacher
- working together with teacher in planning for students' programs
- teachers like to have someone else to plan with
- shared responsibility of students
- good model for bridging gaps between elementary, senior and high schools
- the main benefit is that the child is shared, the classroom teachers and other support personnel share
- support staff are becoming more in tune with staff and the community

- *Social and Emotional Benefits to Student*

- raises kid's self-esteem
- can be fun - enhances the child's self-esteem.
- increased (self-esteem in students)
- boosts the child's self-esteem when they are not withdrawn from their home school
- primary enjoy withdrawal
- students like SERT coming into classrooms so they can be with their classmates
- students enjoy being part of classroom but getting extra help when needed
- model meets needs of adolescent

- *Improved Staff Perception of Students with Special Needs*

- labels disregarded more - just a student and a member of the class.
- in touch with what average and above average students are capable of.

2. Tell me about any drawbacks that you see in Blueprint.

- *Heavy Workload*

- workload has really increased - "spread too thin" now.
- must be fulltime or have 2 SERTS - half time SERT is a waste of time and overloads the SERT
- in program with no money and no extra teachers or resources
- take on a greater workload with no money or extra resources

- planning time is critical but most of time you are "flying by the seat of your pants"
- "teachers don't like to give up prep time to plan with SERT"
- want to plan when SERT is in class, and this often doesn't work - too hectic
- after school is too late for planning
- SERT prep time must be very flexible to fit in with everyone else
- SERT prep time can "EVAPORATE"!
- can feel guilty if given extra prep time - if trips are on for classes
- other teachers feel you have more time and are slacking off [some did not agree with the above and said you had to get rid of the guilt and realize how hard you were really working].
- seems to be a lot more support for ESL programs - certainly in staffing, money.
- paperwork is different at different schools
- 0.5 SERT - difficulty timetabling
- time restriction not allowing SERT to meet all individual needs
- timetabling and fitting into teachers timetables
- timetables never stay the same
- flexibility is the key
- there is not enough staffing, not enough comp. teachers
- timetabling is very difficult
- the paperwork is over-whelming for everyone
- we need time for communication. It takes time to timetable.
- we need time to talk to the teachers who are not presently involved because they do not have students being serviced.
- the papers needed for follow-up take time for consideration, organization, and follow-up.
- I find that the amount of paper to be filled out before coming to committee cuts down on referrals - they consider more carefully the seriousness of the problem. They are more likely to ask informally for help.
- we need real time (time not stolen or created on the fly) for planning and follow-up work. There is so much work. I need a secretary.
- helping with specific task but not helping overall progress - can't go back far enough to teach what is missing - fill the gaps
- integrating all Special needs students - can't be everywhere at once
- no communication, therefore no decent program
- when sharing responsibility for students the drawback for the teacher is to wait for the next school support team meeting. The procedure for presenting a child is hard to stick to, easier to jump in and try to take on case immediately as the SERT.
- support team meetings should be called when needed
- structure is needed

- *Regular Teacher: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- there is always resistance when program is mandated from the top - should be grassroots approach
- some teachers want in-class support, others want withdrawal or all day in comp.
- when the teachers ask for, and the school team recommends, special

support such as enrichment, SLD or social work and if it doesn't happen they get frustrated.
- the method (model) of integration into the classroom is not easy - it is not accepted. There is a fear element. The classrooms you want to get into you can't. Some comp. teachers are reticent about going in themselves.
- they (staff) expect it to happen quicker.
- some see it as a catch word and figure it soon will be gone.
- benefits have to be obvious, need to highlight needs more for the staff. (e.g. the reason the Blueprint evolved, the research).
- staff not willing to wait and see, to give it time. They can't wait or see the long-term change. They are not willing anyway.
- teachers say, "Oh no, something else on my plate." But I say that it has been that way for the last nine years. Every year more things are piled on the plate.
- A benefit is that ownership is retained by the teacher. They are pulled in to keep their students.
- different personalities of staff
- many teachers don't like having children withdrawn and getting a whole different agenda -- those are the students who can't cope
- I didn't know that in the past certain teachers have been overloaded with problems. That is not fair, we need to share the problems around with everyone.
- expectation on SERT is greater - "perform miracles"

- *Issues Concerning the Continuum of Service*

- sending more kids to central - (other comments: some schools are sending fewer)
- need to have withdrawal so that basic skills could be honed or reviewed - skill building for specifics doesn't work in class - too many other kids and it is too noisy.
- Senior School: Core gets support, but classes like Industrial Arts, Music, Family Studies, French and Computers get no help with kids who are integrated.
- provision for SLD students should be able to have withdrawal and not just be lumped in with other regular students just for sake of saying that we integrate all students.
- in most schools there was integration of special needs students for part of the timetable, but there was also withdrawal. This seemed to work the best for all concerned. Withdrawal helped to build certain skills that could not be attained with integration.
- hard to identify certain difficulties if student is not withdrawn.
- I am really concerned with those students that have been a serious problem for three years, they have not learned to read. Their problem is such that it is too severe to deal within the classroom. They are not being identified, this is the resource teachers job to take responsibility for these students. To take it upon themselves to withdraw them. They are too much for the classroom teacher to deal with.
- are we losing track of the special kid, SLD or ADJ.? Are we losing them in the shuffle of integration?
- division of differences in students is too great in many of the classes.

- not seeing gains that would get through withdrawal
- the perception of Blueprint is very different even between school team members. The philosophies are different.
- a lot depends on the school setting, expectations of what would happen

- when the school is set up as child-centered it is much easier to implement the Blueprint. When we have a more traditional setting is very difficult. [Yes, said one, especially in the senior school setting.]

- *Role Negotiation and Conflict*

- I have a Grade 3 class where there is poor discipline. The class is totally out of control. They are hitting one another. Someone should be training these people. I don't feel this is my place. Isn't it the principal's job or the vice-principal job? I can't work in there. I withdraw. [agreement from three others]
- the basis of Blueprint is that the regular classroom teacher is to take more responsibility for their students, to retain responsibility, this is not explicit - it should be more obvious.
- ESL students are benefitting - provide extra program.
- when does ESL become Comp.? There is a hazy area here and sometimes SERT takes on ESL students who are not really Comp.-needy.
- personalities sometimes conflict between ESL and Comp.
- maybe Comp., support and ESL support should be a team.
- since so many ESL students in North end of Scarborough the Comp. teachers felt they were getting short shrift in resources.

- *Need for Individualized Approach Based on Each School's Specific Needs*

- if too formalized, schools may not be able to adapt model to meet needs of school - will depend on staff, principal etc.
- could become too rigid
- different schools have different needs
- need guidelines but schools should dictate implementation according to own needs

- *Need for More Inservice*

- we need greater access to resources for our teachers. Resource materials that we can suggest and they can use in class.
- the Blueprint is abstract, difficult to work through because it is a process. One quarter of the people want concrete information.
- feel ineffective, not focusing on skills, e.g., finger spelling

3. **How has your role changed since you got involved in the Blueprint pilot?**

- *Expansion of the Role of the SERT*

- quick consultative skills have had to be developed
- a very "heavy" role now compared to before
- sometimes makes you a "nag" on the rest of the staff
- meet with teachers - which kids will be presented, have your information ready
- must provide time for the Resource staff - to consult with them
- must learn to take time for this kind of consultation with Psychologist, Social Worker, Guidance
- SERT often gives praise to teacher and does some hand-holding and reassurance.
- I got, "you came just in time" the other day.
- once you break in you are more involved. You both move around the class.
- able to point teachers in directions that more than [just I] am doing it. I am "doing" less myself. Especially if I am away I assume they will do it.
- I had a situation because I was in the class, when I went to work with a group of students, none of them understood [what they were supposed to do]. I spoke to the teacher; she retaught the lesson. She might not have done it if I was not there.
- difficult being accepted into coming into classroom. Teacher who had that support enjoyed it.
- seen as available teacher because you don't have kids coming to you
- the other day I had to clean up a section of the classroom so that I could work. I am not going to do that. I would rather work in my room. I told the students to have it ready for me before I came the next day.
- I like doing the conclusions together [with the teacher].
- I feel overworked and I am out of the school more
- some were more involved with parents than before.
- now a member of the team who decides program strategies for the students
- more visible in school - more accountable for program and assessment of students
- more expection on your knowledge from staff and administration
- I am programming for a lot more children than I used to. I am modifying program for the most needy (instead of those identified which may not end up being the most serious.)
- I am more of a resource person now, a resource role supplying books and materials.

- *Role Negotiation and Conflict*

- the PRIMARY role for the education of the child is still the regular classroom teacher - and they can sometimes be ticked off about this! They want someone else to take and look after the tough cases.

- SERT is extra pair of eyes and ears in the classroom - but this can also turn into a job a parent or an EA could do if you do not resolve this with the teacher.
- concern with role of SERT - "Are you just a band-aid"?
- all things to all people, people coming up with problems that aren't relevant to job i.e., setting up projector
- teacher sees me as a help mate, supporting teacher more than kids, attitude beginning to change
- asked to deal with behaviour, material whereabouts, glorified errand person
- educational assistant versus resource teacher changed through working at it, give responsibility back to teacher
- asked to cover in computer lab and dismiss classes
- [people need] labels for what we're doing, people feel they are being forced into something not naturally done
- teacher wanted typing of stories done by resource teacher
- I am enjoying my role, the evolving of my role is fascinating. Not everyone wants me in their class.
- at this point if they don't want me it's okay.
- I found not being wanted hard to take, I was a regular teacher last year. I was one of them. Now it's as if I had another face. Have I changed?
- I am being treated as a teacher's aid in some classes. I don't like it.
- they are being more aware of the comp. [SERT] role and are asking who else would be good to ask. (extending use of other resource personnel).
- when it is one kid I step in - but what do you do if the whole class is a mess? - I won't step in. I want to but I won't. Whose responsibility is it?
- I have had the experience of being told, "go and read to her".
- I am doing my old job plus my new job

- *Heavy Workload*

- more responsible for paperwork - co-ordinate meetings, keep notes on kids' progress, action items, present to principal.
- some schools made their own forms for the Support Team meetings.
- check list and anecdotal forms were useful.

- *Regular Teacher: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- a teacher said, "say, haven't you worked with this kid? You should have, he should be in 'your' class." [i.e. withdrawal class]
- after I have offered a program, the teacher may say after only two days (instead of a week or two) that this program didn't work.
- I try to get the teachers to see a 'range' of abilities or achievement instead of the narrow perception of specific skills for achievement - about 60% of our teachers are thinking in terms of a range vs. the specific.
- we make the teachers fill out the summary form before they bring a kid to the school support team. If the form is not filled out the student

will not be accepted for review.- the report serves as a good deterrent or highlights a teacher's commitment.
- the teachers look for suggestions instead of giving up.

- *Concern about Level of Expertise Required by the SERTs*

- I find I need more knowledge and advice of how to deal with emotional blocks because they are presenting like learning difficulties.
- I am getting most disabilities turning out to be emotional.
- I am not a behaviourial teacher, I am unsure what to do for the problem, I cannot do it.
- we are just starting to identify our population (not in new school yet). Reading is a great concern. It is so serious we can only do it on withdrawal. Several cases that we could handle in school if only we had the staff or more time. We wouldn't have to central them.

- *Other*

- senior school - seen as responsibility of student to seek help when needed
- as a teacher I am better able to compare what is good or what is not acceptable for achievement in different classes.

4. What parts of the SERT role have you been able to implement so far?

- *Resources to Teachers*

- working as a resource person for the teachers, providing time, materials, lesson and teaching strategies, recommendations for future placement of kids
- the staff are using more resources than ever before - Itinerants, Social Work, Guidance, Speech and Lang.
- difficult to plug into themes in different classrooms - no time to pull the necessary resources
- job getting very demanding, teachers asking for materials for units even when [I am] not involved in their classrooms.
- I also find that supplying resource materials is a very significant part of my role.

- *Relative Amount of Withdrawal/Integration Being Done*

- Blueprint has allowed Speech and Lang. teachers to work with a larger group of kids on withdrawal.
- not doing much resource room - not being asked to fill that role
- I have done withdrawal and gone into two classes
- I have done a quarter day withdrawal and the rest of the time I have

gone into the classes. All of the teachers would like me in their classes but I can't get around.
- When I withdraw I try to work with what is going on in class as much as possible
- I have heavy withdrawal program. There are very serious problems. Four serious problems in one class I withdraw.
- I work in class with withdrawal. I modify the regular program.
- I have a quarter day withdrawal, it varies from month to month. We have portables. The classes are very heavy. There is no room to work there. It is easier to bring them out (Gr. 7). When I do get in it is team teaching. We sit down and talk about what we will do. We share the teaching and the marking. I am very happy with this, it is so in a couple of classes. In another class I am treated as a teachers aid. It is a Grade 8. Scheduling is very difficult...rotary. I have a tough time servicing them. I hope it will get easier. [Three or four teachers laugh. It won't but at least you'll get to recognize why it isn't working] I was not part of the scheduling or of setting up the classes with input to their composition.
- I withdraw three quarters of the day. Two are reading and language the other is math. The other quarter I am in the classroom. I may deal with the whole class or maybe half will come to my room, or we may go to the back. Some kids see me more than others. I would be working on basic skills vs. geometry, for example. I pick up the skills lesson for these kids, emphasis on reviewing or extra practice while she continues on.

- *More Programming and Assessment*

- SERT can help to implement new or different aspects of programming.
- academic, social assessment
- working with students
- working in classroom and monitoring students
- I try to structure it a bit more. I am part of the planning for the in-class language arts sessions. I do a little bit of team teaching too. I get to see all the children in the class. It gives us both more time, with smaller groups.

- *Consultation*

- planning co-operatively with the rest of the staff members
- all of the above [parts of the SERT role] without letting the teacher think I am taking over
- been instrumental in putting the Support Team in place and getting it off the ground.
- When I am in the class I try to be sensitive to the teacher most of the time. I try to modify the program going on in the class. Often the teachers don't understand the modifications I do. They think I am doing it wrong.
- I had to work to get into one class

- *Other*

- I have implemented all in small amounts
- working at implementation of Blueprint conscientiously.

5. Describe any difficulties or constraints that you've encountered so far.

- *Heavy Workload*

- TIME is the key element in making the program work, and there never seems to be enough. Time is factor for getting kids out of regular class, coming in to class, who is benefitting most?
- Timetabling is crucial! Don't put a rookie teacher in this job.
- limited to number of classrooms I can go in. French timetabling preparation causes difficulty.
- like to withdraw more children for specific [work] but timetabling within classroom makes it difficult - [what is the] least disruptive time?
- timetabling: difficult to see the student during the subject time when they need it.

- *Regular Teachers: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- classroom teacher says that flexibility is taken away in program with integration.
- some teachers absolutely refuse to have the SERT in their class doing any kind of teaching.
- must then balance Blueprint program and wishes of administration, with the unco-operative teacher.
- difficult because all of staff is not always with you.
- must have trust with staff, can't be running to Administration, if a teacher is unco-operative or they will never trust you.
- must invite teachers to send kids to Resource room for additional programming, but must go slowly.
- must let teachers know that you can be an asset to them.
- not allowed into classroom. - teacher won't accept responsibility for children.
- teachers want withdrawal - see help as the way it was. Four or five children in every class.
- the attitudes toward integration make it difficult.
- rapport with classroom teacher is important - makes for team teaching if good, but if not, you the SERT many end up feeling like a 5th wheel in the classroom.
- convincing a teacher to adjust their program to the students needs
- teachers feel overloaded.

- *Report Writing*

  - reporting - with teacher is o.k. - Does withdrawal or does each school make up its own policy?
  - some teachers do separate reports on each student they see -maybe redundant if teacher also does one.
  - still using old reports
  - report expected as an attachment, not much to say since only see them 1/2 hour and not doing separate program.
  - reporting needs to be altered, addressed

- *Procedural Problems*

  - evaluation - how to evaluate in all different settings, very difficult, no model, no policy - must have some guidelines.
  - SERT goes to class to help with Reading and the teacher is on Math; the question is what to do? - keep on with Math when student really needs Reading, or start a separate Reading lesson, or just be an extra body to help in the room.
  - not addressing problems some children have.
  - in transition not sure where we're going. Letter to identify children getting support along with report card [produced] confusion

- *Issues Concerning the Continuum of Service*

  - integration [and] kind of program - old lecture method does not work with integration - must be using an activity based program.
  - good to see withdrawn kids in class full time, but this is not always beneficial for the kids.
  - some of the curriculum projects in the schools may actually interfere with the Blueprint program that they are trying to implement; school must decide how to balance both new initiatives.

- *Administrative Support*

  - Administration says they are supportive "but SERT carry the ball the whole way". [This was really stressed in this group.]

- *Need for Individualized Approach Based on Each School's Specific Needs*

  - many kinks have to be worked out. - these are particular to school, rather than general to all schools in Blueprint.

- *Lack of Resources*

  - all teachers chimed in with: portables, too many kids, not enough room, supplies, resources.

- portables are really tough, especially with the snow.
- availability of resources for the classroom teacher to use. English books, tape-recorder, language master, etc. We did appreciate the money from Ron.

6a. Have the Inservice sessions helped you acquire the skills that you need for this role?

- *Positive Feedback*

- opportunity to talk to others was beneficial
- inservices have addressed a lot of problems
- pleased that we are being asked for input of needs and inservices meeting those needs
- in-services have been excellent for the most part.
- in-services were invaluable. They made me focus on some things. They made me more aware. It provided a focus for my professional reading
- in-service helped us to get to know each other and to know that we were all in this together and to share some common experiences.
- Consultative and Observation Skills session was excellent. We could put this to use at our schools.

- *Negative/Critical Feedback*

- Some were too theoretical, they didn't get down to brass tacks. Would like the in-services to focus more, to be more direct
- in-service has not helped to the extent I thought it would.
- sharing has not been done. We need more Make and Take sessions and Storefront sessions so that we can share ideas and have some immediate material to work with.
- the storefront in-service was great but there was not enough of it.
- need more resources - how can in-service help this?

6b. Are there any other skills that you feel you need?

- *Suggestions*

- need more inservicing on consultative skills
- I would like to see in-services with a focus on strategies for integration. Practical ideas for integrating program. Now I am helping them with their work, helping them to get it done, but are they learning? or just keeping up?
- I like the idea of learning about different tests we don't know. [concerning upcoming inservice on formal assessment]
- I need that formal testing in-service - I don't know the tests or understand the jargon.
- need a session on how to manage and develop good interpersonal skills.

- SERTS need info. on how to develop staff; how to work with them; get to grass roots for staff development - only way it will work
- need more round-table discussion - problem solving
- division meetings
- regular, once per month meetings for comp. teachers, as do ESL
- one meeting per term for senior school, high school and feeder schools and special ed. teachers
- take turns meeting at each other's schools.
- maybe the classroom teacher needs to see how to communicate properly with the resource teacher so they see us as a valuable resource. It might alleviate the tension between teachers.
- teachers need to develop a range of awareness, a range instead of a narrow focus; they don't see us as having to accelerate the student's grades.
- we should have in-service of regular and special ed. together.
- need to practice at in-service, no time at schools. Could we video tape ourselves to make sure that we are getting our skills, right?
- the in-services have been broad in topic but we need school specific strategies.
- school staffs need specific in-service.

- *Other*

- you have to have a lot in your head to do well in this job. You have to be able to pull it out quickly, to be flexible. Every situation is unique.
- I love this job even though I am too busy. I like the special kids and the expression they get when they see they are having success, when they see what you can do for them.
- I like to see the progress
- philosophy of teachers must discuss these - no in-service can make you into a new person or a new teacher. This applies to classroom teacher as well.
- change is self-initiated.
- very frustrating role, mind set - only now do I feel comfortable with the model of integration.
- SERTS should be Chairpersons on staff. They deal with so many sides, e.g., Administration, school policy development, teacher training and education, programming, etc.

7. What is your involvement with the school support team?

- heavily involved - initiated group, responsible for paper work and tracking of all kids referred, setting up of regular meetings, dealing with gripes from staff, follow-up, etc.
- work with principal, make sure its done
- present at all meetings - follow-up suggestions are monitored and make sure implemented
- collect presenting sheets - pull OSR's
- inform teachers of meetings, give forms to teachers, talk to teachers

prior - help with forms, collect, photo copy, coffee/treats, organize and monitor follow-up
- as a SERT I am a member. I don't chair.
- all of Board group was on school support teams
- keep own notes
- can't seem to get everyone together at same time
- we have only had one meeting to discuss kids. That is a problem. The SST need to get together, if only informally, to discuss philosophy. I don't feel a coming together of our team. It is supposedly a co-op approach but there is no leader to focus the meeting. No one is designated, we are all equals, we are to meet three times a year. It is not enough.
- we have an excellent SST. We meet once a month regularly. We have a very large team. We ask all the resource people we can. The principal chairs the meeting. The first Monday of every month teachers present. They are freed by a floating supply teacher. S/he brings the concerns in her class. We always try to review the kids we have discussed previously (the month before) and update them.
- ours is the same as above I want to know what the members of the team (the resource people) are being in-serviced on. I am not being used as much for referrals., As I am screening all of the time I don't have time to share and consult. How do we build in time to share? How have psychology and social work been in-serviced? I don't think we are using them as effectively as we could. Our psychologist is willing to share, to sit down with teachers. I do give feedback to teachers about what the team discussed and decided about their kids.
- we meet once a month. Our Vice-principal is the leader. I would like a team like those above but we are having trouble communicating to teachers, I often don't know who is being presented. It is hard to get to the level of the SST's described above.
- you have to make sure that the teachers always go to present or the SERT does. The principal and the SERT always share. We have an in-school meeting before the inter-disciplinary team meets.
- we meet once a month. We also have a very large team. All of our resource people came (Speech and Language, Social Work., SLD., etc., etc.) Ours is co-chaired. We won't accept the student unless we receive the paper work 10 days in advance, if it is late that student would be held over until next month. We try to plug in assistance. A drawback is that we could be moving through the kids more quickly. We only manage to discuss six students of which three would be reviews. There are probably too many people. I don't think the social worker is really necessary. Our guidance is new and wants to know the kids.
- in our school we do need the social worker. We get those kinds of concerns from the teachers. The teachers feel they are on the hot seat. They feel they need an in-service in-school about the team.
- we had an in-service but they are still overwhelmed at first.
- We have two meetings before the meeting. We put it on overheads. The overheads are broken into behaviourial, social etc., they are also broken down into responsibilities, specific. After we go over our notes and update the files. I am given half a day a month.

8. What impact has the implementation of Blueprint, particularly the change in your role, had on your relationship with the rest of the staff?

- *Improved Collaboration and Communication*

- know the staff better.
- staff is more open, more willing to ask for help or information.
- staff more willing to use a Resource person, more trusting.
- have become allies with many teachers and can help them in a professional manner.
- can also back up staff and staff will back you up.
- more accepting than was anticipated
- very accepting, asked opinions, suggestions for students who aren't on comp. list.
- improved communication with teacher
- communicating with more staff members
- began integration with teacher who is innovative willing to try new programs - can advertise to other staff
- teachers at ease - realize we're not there to evaluate them
- unique relationship
- let teachers choose a role that meets their needs
- teacher very accepting of your help in these terms
- I am closer to the staff. I have more contact now.
- we definitely have bonding (we are a new staff). We are very close. There are a lot coming to the comp. teacher to talk. It is pleasant to be with these people.
- The teacher had worked with me before. They are more confident, we work as a team. The Blueprint has crystallized the resistance, it has made me aware of the ugliness behind the resistance. Resistance is there for anything new, not just the Blueprint.
- varies, teacher with whom working are aware and understand work involved, teachers don't seem to know what job involves.

- *Regular Teacher: Expectations, Resistance and Ownership*

- I met with extreme resistance. The plan seemed to have disintegrated, the teacher's aim just to get rid of the kids. When they can't manipulate this they fly into a rage. [this is just a small percentage in the group, the rest had good experiences] Some need to be accountable. They are awful to the children, they don't want to face up to what they are doing.
- The school in general is good. But those like you just described take it out on the comp. teacher because they can't get at the principal. It sure is making me develop more skills. The students need emotional support.
- some teachers want total control of classroom
- I in-serviced the staff. One teacher asked when are we going to get a comp. teacher? They don't see me as doing anything. I wasn't going into the classes at the time.

- *Expansion of the Role of the SERT*

- know the classroom programme and curriculum better
- seem to have less "supply teacher" duties because you can't cover classes since you are in someone else's class teaching -can say you're busy
- increased visibility with the kids
- more involvement with whole child - know more about child
- began integrating in classroom with greater number of comp. students to be serviced
- time is needed to implement, can't change things overnight

9. How have parents reacted to the change in your role?

- *Positive Reaction from Parents*

- there is more interaction with parents now, most parents are positive, but some are negative. They are distrustful.
- never thought they could do it
- the parents are supportive because they know the students are being looked as faster. It is a more efficient personal approach.
- want kids to be in their own class, parents supportive, want clarification of monitoring in senior school
- some parents are so worried. They have had experiences with special ed in the past. This role presents a more positive approach. We are able to supply the help for the needs without labelling or sending them off. It bridges the gap.

- *Negative / Critical Feedback*

- resented the change because they wanted more one to one, individual attention for their child - felt they got results with the old method
- don't perceive children getting help
- for the severe problems the parents won't have anything to do with Special Ed.
- don't understand, difficult to understand new role

- *Other*

- how the program is presented to parents is important - When is the program presented? Some schools explained it in their school handbook, and gave names of the models of service and explained other details of the program.
- no feed back, not many questions
-our parents haven't really noticed because the student needs were being met. We were doing it before. We know who to go to for a problem.
- are we looking at catching up or helping them to learn?
- some doctors at Hospital for Sick Children are recommending

withdrawal time for certain learning difficulties. How do you explain this within the confines of the Blueprint situation? - to your staff, to parents, to yourself?

10. How have students reacted to the change in your role?

- *Positive Reaction from Students*

- never thought they could do it in regular class
- juniors like it
- some need to feel part of group
- our school is not the same school as before. We had many kids who would not speak. They were traumatized. They couldn't learn. Now they are not being rejected. We had nine elective mutes, from specific classes. They were rejected but now they are being accepted better. The SERT provides the emotional support, they are so much happier being integrated.
- the kids enjoy having the SERT in the class, especially the older kids. Our students are not so far behind academically - Ours are two or three years behind.
- the regular kids like getting the extra help. As first they resisted me, "you're for the dumb kids", they said, but now they like to have the assistance.
- they help each other in the classroom more now.
- a lot more students are joining in for the withdrawal time set aside each day. Kids of different abilities come together and help each other. One group may be there for enrichment, another for reading or Math skill review.
- the kids like to come, this is no longer the room or the teacher for the dummies.
- the kids feel positive about the extra help they are getting.
- the teacher will often ask for help for kids in certain areas.
- you feel as if you are an extra teacher, and the kids don't have to wait as long to get attention when you are in the classroom.
- "More questions are asked and answered when the SERT is in the room".
- the SERT is a support for kids when they are in the room and this is comforting for the kid and he/she is maybe more willing to take a chance. Can check it out with SERT first before giving an answer. Teacher gave a specific example here.

- *Negative/Critical Feedback*

- primary like to be withdrawn
- kids don't like it. They want to be withdrawn. They want it for they see they are learning. It is specific, they know it is learning. A child left me a note "my words are better now". I love you". The kids are learning (in withdrawal)
- it has been said that a kids self-esteem is built into interaction in the

classroom, but I am finding that this is not so. - it is the classroom teachers that are important there. (in building self esteem in the class).

11. Do you have any suggestions to the Blueprint planning team for facilitating the SERT role in the future?

- *Legitimizing the Policy: Bringing Regular Staff on Board*

- inservicing with regular classroom teachers to be more accepting of role
- defining role to classroom teacher
- explaining policy to staff
- philosophy has not been explained to regular class teacher
- someone should clarify our role for the rest of the teaching population
- there should be general in-servicing across the board. They need to value us.
- we need to know that School staff will be in-serviced -guarantee.
- new to school - [they] need to hear it.
- why its' being done - what does research show

- *Validate Role of SERT*

- commitment from comp. teacher to stay in role
- it should be a full time position not half time
- the comp. teacher should not be used as supply teacher
- the comp. teacher should not be used for coverage
- we need proper space, validation for our program
- we know everyone is short of space across the board but we need a room
- it is too easy to close down the comp
- we'll need extra SERTS in each school.

- *More Networking*

- time to verbalize - for staff [i.e. time in school to talk, share] - needs /problems/ concerns.
- what would staffs like SERTS to do [role in school is fuzzy].
- need to share - like ESL - go to see classes, school.
- networking - mentoring - pairing with - in-service-schools. Why haven't we met as whole group [rather than as] subgroups.
- who else is involved - tap into [their] knowledge.

- *Need for Clarity that Blueprint Does Not Endanger Continuum of Service*

- every student not suited to full integration.

- revolving door
- dead-end in Special class
- Blueprint only for mild/moderate cases

- *Local/School-Based Inservicing*

- time for inservicing needs to be established
- maybe should be guidelines for future meetings (grassroots).

- *More Resources*

- we need more money more staffing

- *Other*

- takes time
- lobby groups [going to] the government - where do these people go - how do we accommodate for them. [i.e. Blueprint policy must be congruent with Ministry of Education policy which represents various interest groups]
- self-esteem.
- more kids going to Collegiate program.